

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the Official Action of September 24, 2003, relating to the above-identified application.

A request for a three-month extension of time, together with the associated fee, is filed herewith.

It is noted that Claims 4 and 17-19 remain allowable over the prior art.

It is further noted that the previously indicated allowability of Claims 2, 3, and 20-31 has been withdrawn in view of the newly-cited reference, *Ishii* (JP 11-301365).

The rejection of Claims 2, 3, 17 [sic] and 20 to 30, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by the *Ishii* reference is traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested. (Claim 17 has been indicated as allowable; and, therefore, the inclusion of Claim 17 in this rejection is believed to be in error.)

The Official Action alleges that the Japanese reference discloses a structure for mounting cameras on a vehicle and attempts to describe the features of the Japanese reference in the terminology found in applicant's claims. In particular, attention is drawn to the discussion of the "taper plate" on pg. 3, beginning at line 5, of the Official Action. The Official Action alleges that the taper plate is for adjusting a vertical angle of the optical axis of the stereo cameras and that the taper plate is formed of a wedge-like plate and sandwiched by mounting the mounting seat surface of the chassis in the mounting position of the vehicle body when the chassis is mounted onto the vehicle body. It is also said that the taper plate consists of taper plates having

App. No. 09/665,105
Amend. dated March 19, 2004
Resp. to Office Action dated Sept. 24, 2003

different taper angles so that the optical axis of the stereo cameras is directed into a correct direction when the chassis is mounted onto the mounting position of the vehicle body.

Applicant has advised that the summary of the Japanese reference in the Official Action is not correct.

Submitted herewith is a partial copy of the Japanese Patent Publication relied on in the Official Action in which the description as to the "attaching spacer 7" is outlined in red. The only disclosure of the "attaching spacer 7" appears in paragraph 0010 of the Japanese language document at pg. 3, col. 1 thereof.

Also submitted herewith is an English language translation of the relevant part of paragraph 0010 in col. 1, pg. 3 of the Japanese reference.

It will be seen that the Japanese reference describes the attaching spacer as being a plate made of hard resin or hard rubber which absorbs the inaccuracy of form of the attaching part 26 and absorbs the vibration transmitted to the camera stay 8. The purpose of the attaching spacer 7 is to provide a supporting device for an on-vehicle stereo camera system which is capable of keeping the distance measure accuracy within a permitted limit by preventing the distortion and the vibration of the camera stay 8.

Figure 3 in the Japanese reference, is an exploded perspective view which shows the support device for a on-vehicle stereo camera system. The top component 6 indicates an attaching part which is attached on the inside to the roof of the vehicle.

The camera stay 8 is fixed with three bolts to the vehicle side attaching part 6 in area 25, such that the board shaped attaching spacer 7 is sandwiched between the attaching part 6 and the camera stay 8.

There is no disclosure of a taper plate; that is, plates having a taper so that the most adequate taper angle can be selected to allow the optical axis of the stereo cameras to be carefully adjusted so as to be directed into the predetermined correct direction. Applicant's invention enables the selection of a tapered plate with the correct dimensions so as to solve the problem of incorrect alignment of optical axes of the cameras.

This is neither disclosed nor suggested in the Japanese patent which simply shows a plate of even dimension with no tapering or adjustment possibility. In fact, the non-tapered plate shown in the Japanese reference is made of a hard resin or hard rubber and, therefore, can be compressed to some extent when the three bolts are tightened. But there is no teaching that the plate serves any function in the adjustment of the direction of the optical axis of the right or left cameras so that the axis will be correctly aligned in the denied direction. Hence, a person skilled in the art would find no information in the reference as to how to solve the misalignment problem.

The functioning of applicant's invention is explained in the application, for example, on pg. 3, beginning on line 3; pg. 5, beginning at line 33; and continuing on to pg. 6, lines 1-8.

The feature of the tapering plates which permits the adjustment of the axis is entirely lacking in the cited Japanese publication; and, therefore, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of Claims 2 and 3 should be withdrawn.

App. No. 09/665,105
Amend. dated March 19, 2004
Resp. to Office Action dated Sept. 24, 2003

As to Claims 20-30, Claim 20 has now been amended to more clearly point out the mounting mechanism provided for mounting the chassis to the automobile vehicle. Thus, Claim 20 now specifies that there is a mounting seat member attached to the chassis at the mounting seat surface and there is a wedge-shaped plate for attachment to the mounting seat member. The definition of the chassis has also been revised in Claims 20 and 23 to define it as having a hooked sectional shape which is disclosed on pg. 6, line 16, of the present application.

The Japanese reference cited in the Official Action does not disclose the configuration set forth in Claims 20 to 30; and, therefore, the rejection on the ground of anticipation should be withdrawn.

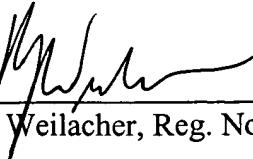
With the deletion of Claim 31, the rejection of Claim 31, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is rendered moot.

In view of the foregoing amendment and discussion, applicant requests favorable consideration at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

SMITH, GAMBRELL & RUSSELL, LLP

By:


Robert G. Weilacher, Reg. No. 20,531

Suite 3100, Promenade II
1230 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30309-3592
Telephone: (404) 815-3593
Facsimile: (404) 685-6893